



by **Deva Hardeep Singh** | **Dharma Seeds Yoga Press** © | 09  
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**New Book just published**

# Medicine Wheel & Mindfulness

Here's a breakdown of what medicine wheels are used for in Native American cultures and the issues surrounding their appropriation:

## Traditional Purposes of Medicine Wheels

- **Spiritual and Ceremonial:** Medicine wheels are sacred spaces for ceremonies, prayers, healing rituals, and connecting with the natural world and spiritual forces.
- **Astronomical:** Some medicine wheels act as calendars marking significant celestial events like solstices, equinoxes, and the movement of stars.
- **Teaching Tools:** The symbolism of the medicine wheel—with its four directions, seasons, elements, colors, and more—represents a holistic view of the world. It teaches balance, harmony, and the interconnectedness of life.
- **Community Gathering:** Medicine wheels serve as places for the community to congregate, share stories, perform dances, and strengthen bonds.

## Important Considerations

- **Diversity:** Each Native American tribe has its own traditions and interpretations of the medicine wheel.

There isn't one single, universal meaning.

- **Respecting Sacredness:** Medicine wheels are deeply sacred symbols. Understanding their origins and the cultural significance is vital for anyone wanting to learn about them.
- **Appropriation:** In recent decades, New Age and non-Native groups have adopted and often misused elements of the medicine wheel. This can trivialize or distort its original meaning and cause harm to Indigenous communities.



**If you're interested in learning more, here's how to do it respectfully:**

- **Research:** Seek out reputable resources written by Native American authors and scholars.
  - **Cultural Centers:** Visit Native American cultural centers or museums to learn about specific tribal uses of medicine wheels.
  - **Support Indigenous Voices:** Listen to and support Native American communities who are speaking out against the misappropriation of their cultural symbols.
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Here's a deeper dive into the astronomical aspects of medicine wheels:

### **Types of Alignments:**

- **Solstices and Equinoxes:** Many medicine wheels have alignments marking the summer and winter solstices (the longest and shortest days of the year) and sometimes the spring and fall equinoxes (when day and night are equal length). These alignments were likely used to track the passage of seasons, important for agriculture or ritual timing.
- **Stellar Alignments:** Some medicine wheels align with particular stars or star clusters. For instance, the Bighorn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming has alignments with the rising of bright stars like Rigel, Aldebaran, and

Sirius. These stars may have held specific cultural or mythological significance.

## Examples:

- **Bighorn Medicine Wheel (Wyoming):** Likely one of the most well-studied, this wheel has cairn spokes aligning with summer solstice sunrise/sunset, along with the rising of significant stars.
- **Majorville Medicine Wheel (Alberta, Canada):** This wheel also aligns with summer solstice sunrise/sunset and certain star risings.
- **Moose Mountain Medicine Wheel (Saskatchewan, Canada):** Alignments with solstices and bright stars are found here as well.

## How Alignments Worked:

- **Cairns as Sighting Devices:** Piles of stones (cairns) along the perimeter and spokes of the wheel may have been used as markers in conjunction with the central cairn. Observers could track the rising and setting of celestial objects in relation to these markers.
- **Shadows:** Some researchers hypothesize that shadows cast by stones at certain times of day or year also played a role in astronomical observations.

## Significance of Astronomical Knowledge:

- **Calendrical Systems:** Understanding the movement of the sun and stars was crucial for agricultural societies, knowing when to plant and harvest. It also may have determined the timing of important ceremonies.
- **Spiritual Connection:** The sky held great importance in many Native American belief systems. Observing celestial movements and aligning structures with them further solidified the connection between the earthly and spiritual realms.
- **Knowledge Transmission:** Medicine wheels with astronomical alignments likely served as knowledge centers, where elders would transmit vital information about the cycles of the seasons and the stars to younger generations.

**Important Note:** It's essential to remember that not all medicine wheels had a strong astronomical function. The purpose and significance varied among cultures and specific sites.



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knowledge transmission using medicine wheels with astronomical alignments:

### **Informal Learning Environment:**

- **Storytelling and Songs:** Elders likely used stories and songs associated with celestial bodies and constellations to teach younger generations about

astronomical cycles. These stories would have been passed down orally for countless generations.

- **Interactive Learning:** The medicine wheel itself could have served as a giant teaching tool. Elders might have pointed out alignments, explained the significance of different directions, and demonstrated how to use the wheel to track celestial movements.

### **Specific Examples of Knowledge Transmission:**

- **Planting and Harvesting:** Understanding the cycles of stars like the Pleiades (Seven Sisters) or Orion's Belt could have been crucial for knowing when to plant and harvest crops.
- **Ceremonial Timing:** The movements of celestial bodies may have dictated the timing of important ceremonies and rituals throughout the year. For instance, solstices and equinoxes might have been marked by specific ceremonies.
- **Navigation:** Knowledge of stars would have been essential for navigation, especially for hunting groups or those traveling long distances.

### **Importance of Place-Based Learning:**

- **Connection to the Land:** Medicine wheels, being physical structures built on the land, served as a powerful tool for connecting younger generations to their place in the cosmos. Observing the stars from the wheel would have fostered a deep appreciation for the natural world.
- **Generational Continuity:** The medicine wheel likely served as a focal point for transmitting knowledge not just about astronomy, but also about history, traditions, and cultural values across generations.

### **Challenges of Studying Knowledge Transmission:**

- **Oral Traditions:** Much of this knowledge transmission was likely done through oral traditions, which are difficult to document and verify.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding the specific cultural meanings behind astronomical knowledge requires working closely with and respecting Indigenous communities.

### **Here are some additional points to consider:**

- **Diversity of Knowledge Systems:** Different Native American cultures likely had their own unique ways of using medicine wheels for knowledge transmission.

- **Evolution of Knowledge:** The knowledge associated with medicine wheels likely wasn't static. Over time, observations, cultural changes, and interactions with other groups may have influenced how this knowledge was transmitted.

## Further Research:

- Look for studies by Native American scholars or researchers who have collaborated with Indigenous communities to understand knowledge transmission practices related to medicine wheels.
- Examine resources from reputable anthropological organizations focused on Native American cultures.



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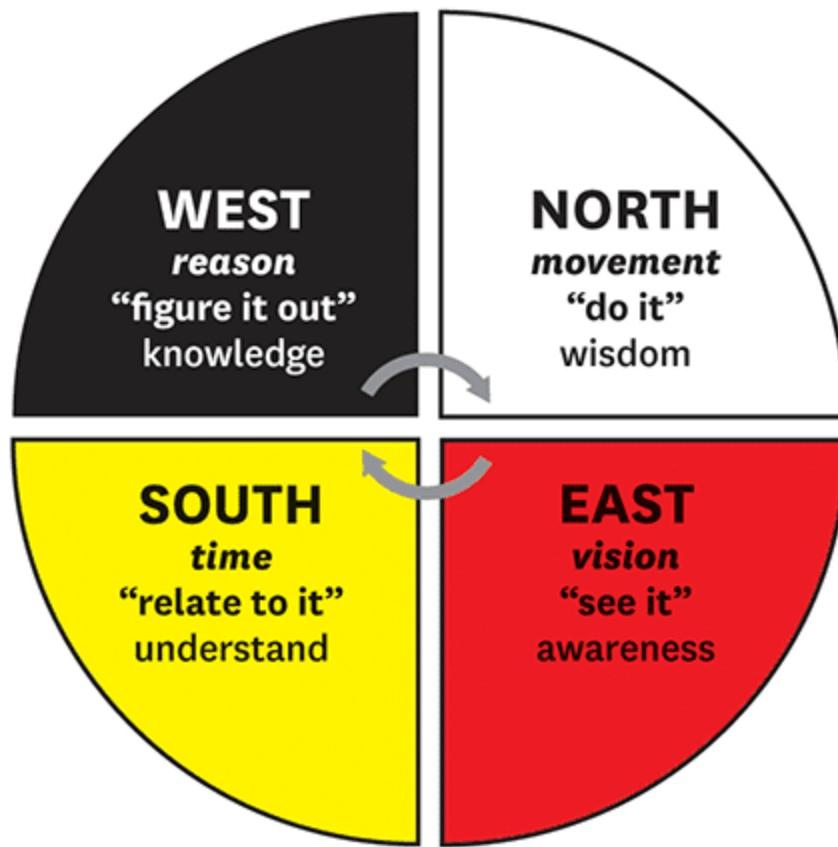
While there isn't a single definitive source due to the cultural sensitivity and oral tradition aspects mentioned previously, here are some resources to explore that incorporate collaboration with Indigenous communities and may shed light on knowledge transmission practices related to medicine wheels:

- **Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR):** This organization at the American Philosophical Society (APS) focuses on collaborative research with Indigenous communities (<https://www.amphilsoc.org/library/CNAIR>). While they might not have specific publications on medicine wheels, their approach emphasizes working with communities to understand and share cultural knowledge.
- **Research Frameworks based on Indigenous Worldviews:** Many contemporary scholars are incorporating Indigenous research paradigms into their studies. Look for academic papers by researchers like Dr. Nicole Bell (Anishinaabe) whose work explores the application of Medicine Wheel teachings in education (<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/teaching-by-the-medicine-wheel/>).
- **Tribal Websites and Cultural Centers:** Many Native American tribes have established websites or cultural centers with information about their traditions and cultural symbols, including medicine wheels. These resources may provide insights based on tribal knowledge, although information about knowledge transmission practices might be limited due to cultural sensitivity.

## Here are some additional tips for finding relevant studies:

- **Search academic databases** using keywords like “Medicine Wheel,” “Knowledge Transmission,” “Indigenous Knowledge Systems,” and the name of a specific tribe or cultural group you’re interested in.
- **Look for publications by Native American authors and scholars** published in reputable academic journals or books.
- **Explore websites of Indigenous organizations** focused on cultural preservation and education.

Remember, fully understanding knowledge transmission practices often relies on oral traditions passed down within Indigenous communities. Respecting cultural protocols and sensitivity is crucial. The resources above can be a starting point for your exploration, while keeping in mind that some knowledge may not be publicly available.

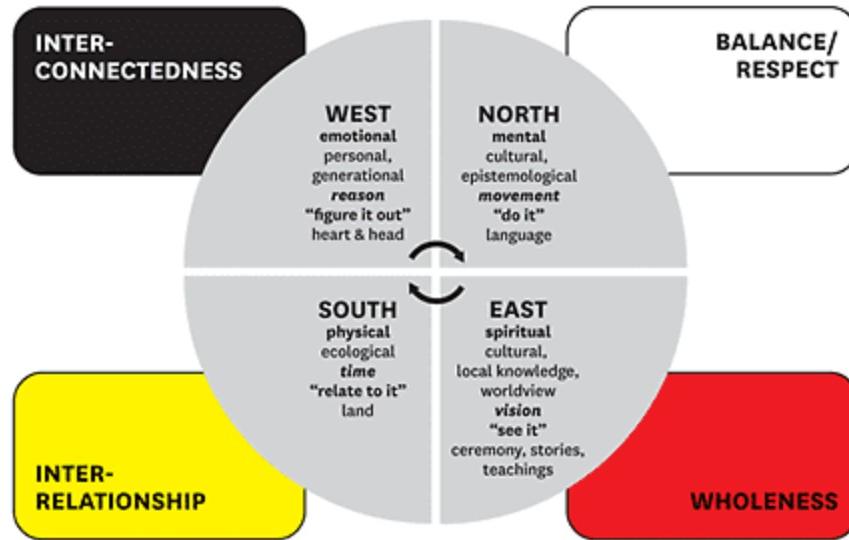


**Figure 1: Gifts of the Four Directions**

<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/teaching-by-the-medicine-wheel>

Within Medicine Wheels there are many, many “rings” of teachings that exist. A ring of teaching is created by considering a part of the teaching from each of the four directions. These rings of teachings have significant meaning independently but are all the more powerful when understood as a collective of interdependent knowledge teachings and practices. Some of these rings include: seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), times of day (morning,

afternoon, evening, night), stages of life (infant, youth, adult, elder), and life givers (earth, sun, water, air).







## Pre-Caution

While engaging in any **yoga activities, always remember:**

- **Listen to your body.** Don't push yourself too hard, and be sure to **modify poses as needed**.
- **Use props to help you.** Props can be a great way to **make poses more accessible** and to reduce the risk of injury.
- **Take breaks.** If you're feeling tired or sore, take a break from your practice.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** If you're not sure how to modify a pose or if you have any concerns, ask your instructor for help.

**Always listen to your body and modify poses as needed.** Also review on our [website](#), our guidance on using Yoga for mental health purposes.

<https://dharmaseedsyoga.wordpress.com/control/>



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## Mindfulness Practices

Here are five guided meditations on the medicine wheel, along with brief descriptions and where you might find them.

Note that access to some may require subscription or purchase:

### **1. Medicine Wheel – A Guided Meditation (Cathexis**

**Therapeutic Imagery)**

- Focus: Balancing the elements of earth, air, fire, and water within yourself. Evokes nature imagery and reflection on personal qualities.
- Location: <https://shawnquinlivan.com/new-seminars-workshops/medicine-wheel-a-guided-meditation/>

### **2. Medicine Wheel Meditations (YouTube)**

- Offers several short meditations associated with different directions of the medicine wheel (like South, West, North, East). Good for focusing on specific aspects.
- Location: Search “Medicine Wheel Meditations” on YouTube and choose videos that resonate with you.

### **3. 20min | Guided Meditation for guidance and harmony | Medicine Wheel (YouTube)**

- Focus: Connection to the natural world, spirit guides, and finding inner balance through the medicine wheel’s teachings.

- Location: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Zvb6dxTJB14>

#### 4. Medicine Wheel Guided Meditation (Insight Timer)

- May find various meditations on the medicine wheel concept. This app lets you filter by length and teacher, allowing you to customize the experience.
- Location: Insight Timer app: <https://insighttimer.com/> (Requires sign-up)

#### 5. Medicine Wheel Teachings and Meditations (Books or Websites)

- Books on Native American spirituality or the medicine wheel often include guided meditations. These offer deeper context alongside the practice.

### Important Considerations:

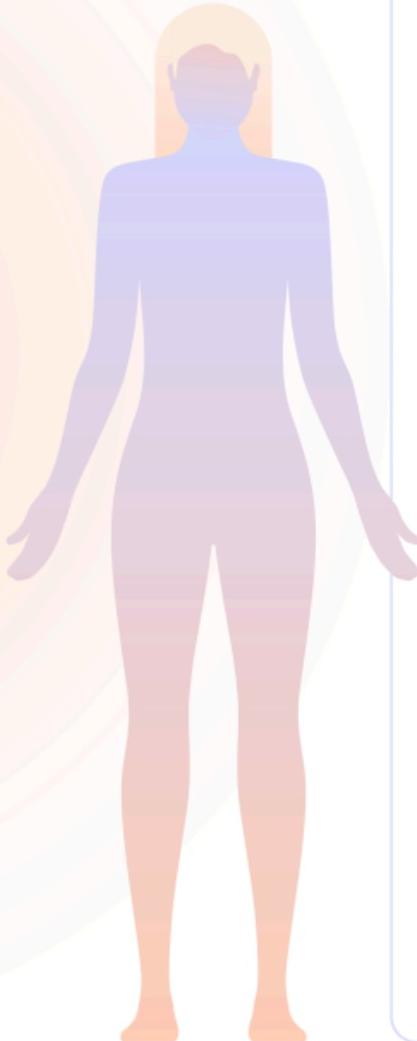
- **Origin:** Be aware of the origin of the meditation. Is it led by someone with cultural knowledge or background in Native American traditions?
- **Respectful Approach:** Does the meditation avoid appropriation, honor the sacredness of the medicine wheel, and acknowledge the diversity of interpretations among tribes?

# Resources

## Body Scan Meditation

⌚ Time: 15-20 Minutes

Difficulty: Easy



### THE BENEFITS OF THE BODY SCAN MEDITATION

- **Builds greater body awareness** – Tuning into sensations across the body helps become more aware of what's going on inside. It also helps you get "out of your mind & into your body"
- **Breaks habitual body tension** – By noticing areas of tightness, we can send conscious breaths to invite softening and relaxation.
- **Cultivates present moment focus** – The process of guiding attention through the body anchors us in the here and now, rather than ruminating on thoughts.
- **Encourages non-judging awareness** – Noticing sensations without labeling them as good or bad fosters equanimity in our body experience.
- **Allows appreciation of the body** – As we systematically scan through the body, we can feel gratitude for all the body does for us.
- **Can be done lying down** – The fact that it can be practiced lying in bed makes it an easy habit, especially helpful before sleep.

Find the instructions for the body scan meditation on the next page. You'll also find a script that you can use.

# Body Scan Meditation

 Time: 15-20 Minutes  
 Difficulty: Easy

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 01. Find a Comfortable Position:** Begin by finding a quiet, comfortable space where you won't be disturbed. You can do the body scan lying down, sitting, or in any position that feels comfortable for you. Ensure your back is straight, but not tense.
- 02. Close Your Eyes and Breathe:** Gently close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a moment, and exhale slowly through your mouth. As you breathe, start to let go of external worries and thoughts.
- 03. Set an Intention:** If you like, set an intention for your practice. It could be something like, "May this practice bring calmness and awareness to my body."
- 04. Begin with Your Feet:** Direct your attention to your feet. Notice any sensations you feel here. It could be warmth, coolness, pressure, tingling, or maybe nothing at all. Acknowledge whatever you find.
- 05. Gradually Move Upward:** Slowly move your focus up to your ankles, calves, knees, and thighs. Spend a few moments on each body part. As you do this, remember to breathe naturally. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the part of the body you are focusing on.
- 06. Explore Your Torso:** Bring your awareness to your lower back and abdomen. Feel your belly rise and fall with each breath. Then, move up to your chest and upper back. Notice the sensations associated with breathing – the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the rise and fall of the chest.
- 07. Focus on Your Arms and Hands:** Shift your attention to your fingers, hands, and arms. Observe any feelings of touch, temperature, or movement.
- 08. Notice Your Neck, Face, and Head:** Bring your awareness to your neck, facial muscles, and the top of your head. Be mindful of any tension or relaxation in these areas.
- 09. Scan the Whole Body:** Now, widen your focus to include the entire body. From the top of your head to the tips of your toes, feel your body as a whole. Breathe in deeply, bringing energy to your body, and breathe out any tension.
- 10. Conclude Your Practice:** When you're ready to finish, start to bring your attention back to the room. Wiggle your fingers and toes, gently stretch if needed, and when you feel ready, open your eyes. Take a moment to notice how your body feels compared to before the meditation.
- 11. Reflect:** After completing the body scan, take a minute to reflect on the experience. Notice any changes in your body or mind. Remember that there's no right or wrong way to feel during this practice.

# Body Scan Meditation

 Time: 15-20 Minutes

 Difficulty: Easy

 INCLUDES AUDIO VERSION

## SCRIPT

Find a comfortable seated or standing position, or lie down with head support. Allow your body to relax and release tension. When ready, close your eyes and focus on your breath. Take long, slow deep breaths. Inhale through your nose, feeling your belly expand. Exhale through your nose or mouth. Settle into a natural rhythm.

Bring your attention down to your feet. Start observing any sensations here – perhaps warmth, tingling, numbness, or nothing at all. That's perfectly fine. You can wiggle your toes a little inside your shoes or socks and feel your feet just as they are. Imagine breathing energy into your feet as you inhale. Exhale any tension. If your mind wanders, gently escort it back to your feet.

When you're ready to move on, allow your feet to dissolve in your mind. Shift your focus now to your ankles, calves, knees, and thighs. Pay attention to any sensations arising in your legs. Maybe you notice some tingling or pulsing. Temperature changes. Points of contact with the floor or chair. Just observe with an open, curious mind without needing to change anything.

When you feel ready to transition, go ahead and let the focus on your legs fade. Bring your awareness now into your lower back and pelvic region. Feel any sensations here...is there any stiffness or tension to release? Warmth? Tingling? Throbbing? The rise and fall of breathing? Accept any sensations you discover just as they are.

Slowly move your attention up into your mid and upper back now. Feel into the points of contact, like your back against a chair. The subtle movements caused by breathing. Any areas holding tightness. With each exhale you can imagine letting go of that tension, allowing your breath to relax your back muscles.

Shift your focus next to your stomach. You might notice emptiness or fullness, the feeling of clothing, warmth, digestion or other activity. Just observe with neutral, non-judging awareness.

Now let's bring awareness to your chest. You may become aware of your steady heartbeat. The chest rising with each inhale and falling with each exhale. If your mind begins to wander, gently notice this without judgment and bring it back to noticing the sensations in your chest. Notice how all sensations shift and change moment to moment. Observe how no sensation is permanent. That's okay. Just let them come and go.

When you're ready, guide your focus now down into your hands and arms. Pay attention to any sensations in your fingers, palms, the back of your hands and wrists. You can even imagine your breath flowing in and out through your fingertips if you'd like. Shift your mind between your left arm and your right arm. You might notice a slight difference in sensations – no need to judge this. As you exhale, you may experience the arm soften and release tension.

Now, bring your attention to your neck, shoulders, and throat. We often hold tension here so as you breathe in, imagine the breath dissolving any knots or tightness. Notice any sensations here. Whatever you feel, it's all okay. With each exhale, consciously relax your neck and shoulders even more.

Finally, take a moment now to feel your whole body at once – from the top of your head down to your feet. Allow your entire being to relax into the surface below you. Tune into the gentle rhythm of the breath as it moves through your body.

When you feel ready to end your practice, gently open your eyes and come back to your surroundings. Notice how your body feels now compared with the beginning. See if you can carry that sense of relaxation and mindfulness with you as you transition to the next moments of your day.

- [PTSD resources](#)

- **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.** This is a free and confidential service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.** This is a free and confidential service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **The National Center for PTSD:** <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- **The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN):** <https://www.rainn.org/>
- **The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** <https://www.nami.org/>
- **The American Psychological Association:** <https://www.apa.org/>
- **Prison Yoga Project – 200hr Yoga Teachgers Training:** <https://community.prisonyoga.org/courses/yoga-social-justice-and-leadership-a-200-hour-yoga-teacher-training/>
- **In The Rooms (web based 12-STEP rooms)** <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>
- **National Institute of Mental Health:** <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/index.shtml>
- **Attention Deficit Disorder Association:** <https://add.org/>
- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:** <https://www.aacap.org/>
- **StopBullying.gov:** <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
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- **The Trevor Project:** <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- **The National Institute of Mental Health:** <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/index.shtml>
- **The National Autism Association:** <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>
- **The Learning Disabilities Association of America:** <https://ldaamerica.org/>

You can also find a therapist in your area by visiting the Psychology Today therapist directory: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

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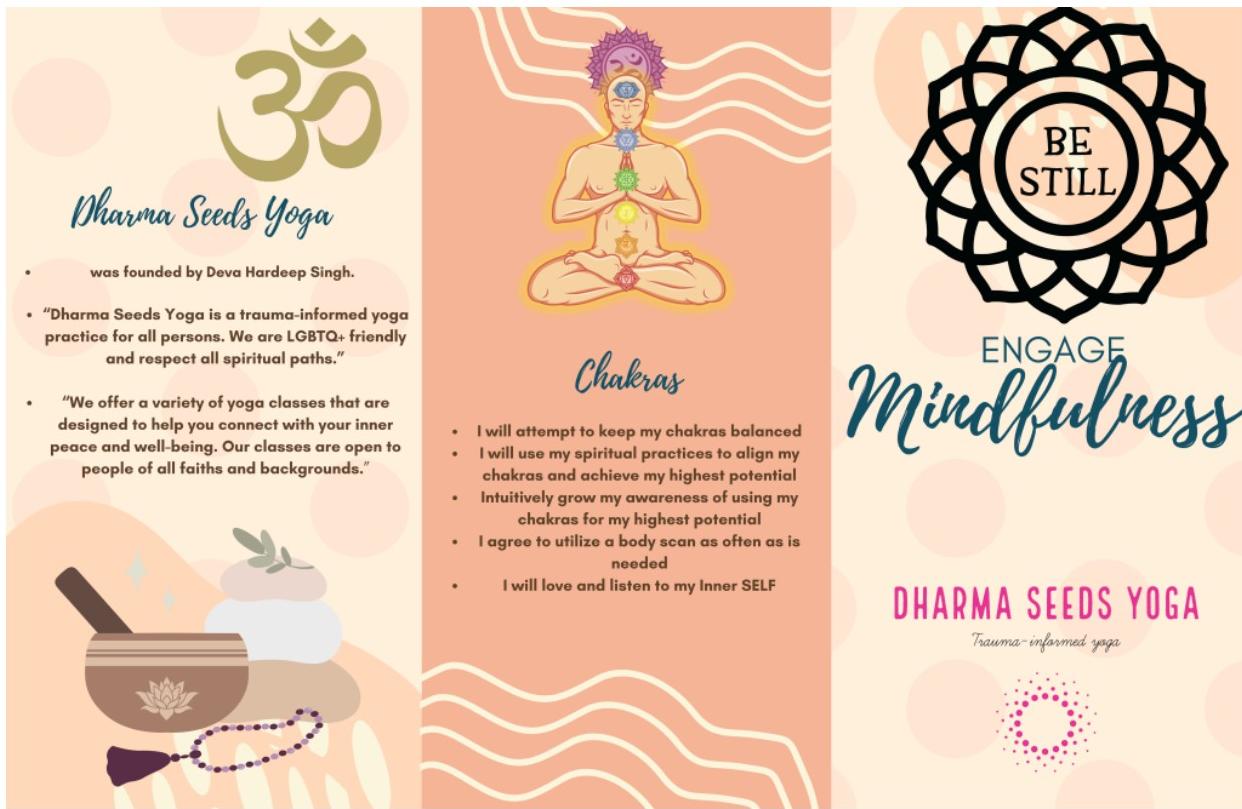
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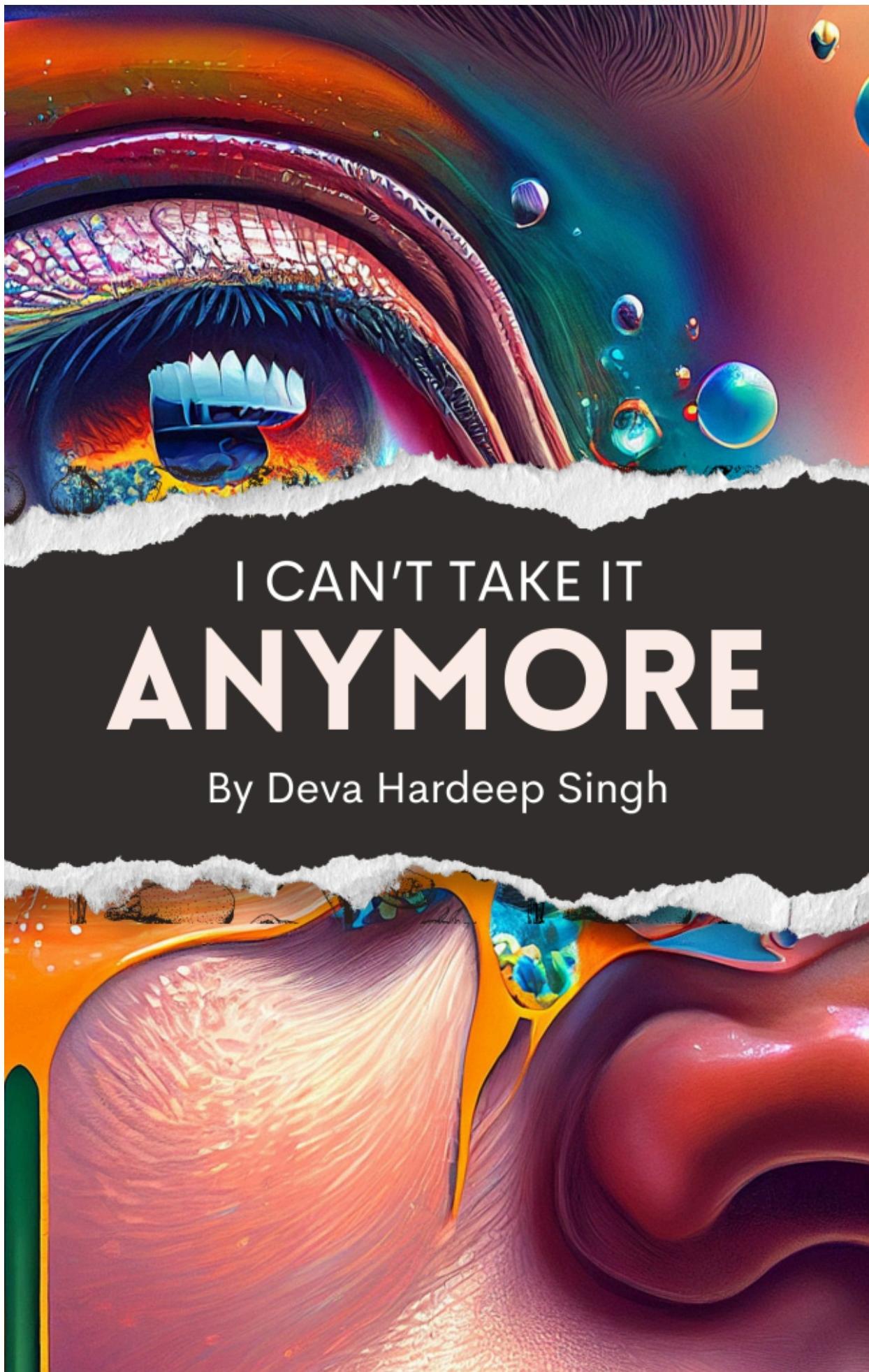
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Finding Light When You Feel Down This book offers a roadmap to navigate challenges and find inner peace. It starts by acknowledging moments when you feel low, as captured in “He’s Down and Not Responding” (pg. 4). This initial recognition is crucial for moving forward. The following sections offer tools for personal growth. “The Divine Feminine is the source of our creativity and intuition” (pg. 13) suggests tapping into this inner wellspring for guidance and inspiration. Similarly, “GET OUT in Nature” (pg. 24) highlights the restorative power of spending time outdoors. Immersing yourself in nature can be a powerful way to reconnect with yourself and find clarity. The journey to inner peace also involves self-reflection and letting go. “Laying your actions at the feet of God” (pg. 33) encourages surrender and acceptance, while “Addressing the elephant in the room... Burnout” (pg. 39) tackles a prevalent issue in our fast-paced world. Recognizing and addressing burnout is essential for reclaiming your well-being. This is a true story written by a disabled guy. Helping you see past your own limitations.

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The Dharma Seeds Yoga Press 2024 ADHD Mindfulness Planner is a comprehensive resource for people with ADHD who are looking to improve their mindfulness skills. The planner includes a variety of activities and exercises, such as mindful breathing, body scans, and journaling prompts. It also includes space to track your progress and to set goals.

The planner is designed to be accessible and user-friendly. The activities are written in a clear and concise way, and the planner includes plenty of space to write down your thoughts and feelings. The planner is also visually appealing, with calming illustrations and a soothing color scheme.

The Dharma Seeds Yoga Press 2024 ADHD Mindfulness Planner is a valuable tool for anyone who wants to improve their mindfulness skills. It is a helpful resource for people with ADHD who are looking to manage their symptoms, improve their focus, and reduce stress.

Here are some of the features of the Dharma Seeds Yoga Press 2024 ADHD Mindfulness Planner:

- Mindfulness activities and exercises: The planner includes a variety of mindfulness activities and exercises, such as mindful breathing, body

scans, and journaling prompts. These activities are designed to help you develop your mindfulness skills and to improve your overall well-being. ·

- Goal-setting: The planner includes space to set goals for yourself. This can help you to stay motivated and to track your progress over time.
- Progress tracking: The planner includes space to track your progress on your mindfulness journey. This can help you to see how far you have come and to identify areas where you need to improve.
- Calming illustrations: The planner includes calming illustrations that can help you to relax and to focus. · Soothing color scheme: The planner has a soothing color scheme that can help you to feel calm and relaxed.

If you are looking for a comprehensive and user-friendly mindfulness planner, the Dharma Seeds Yoga Press 2024 ADHD Mindfulness Planner is a great option. It is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to improve their mindfulness skills and to manage their ADHD symptoms.

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Mindfulness ~ The Minds Martial Arts<sup>TM</sup>



# MINDFULNESS WORKBOOK

DEVA HARDEEP SINGH  
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# NOW FOR SALE

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment, without judgment. It is a way of training the mind to focus and to be aware of our thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Meditation is a form of mindfulness that involves sitting quietly and focusing on the breath.

The Mind's Martial Arts is a mindfulness workbook that can help you to learn the basics of mindfulness and meditation. The workbook is divided into three sections:

- The first section introduces the basics of mindfulness, such as what mindfulness is, why it is beneficial, and how to get started.
- The second section provides a variety of mindfulness exercises, including guided meditations, breathing exercises, and body scans.
- The third section provides tips for integrating mindfulness into your daily life.

The Mind's Martial Arts is a comprehensive and easy-to-follow guide to mindfulness. It is a great resource for anyone who is interested in learning how to be more mindful.

Mindfulness is a skill that can be learned and practiced.

Mindfulness is a powerful tool that can help you to live a happier, healthier, and more fulfilling life. With regular

practice, you can learn to control your thoughts and emotions, improve your focus, and increase your happiness.

The Mind's Martial Arts™ Chapter 1



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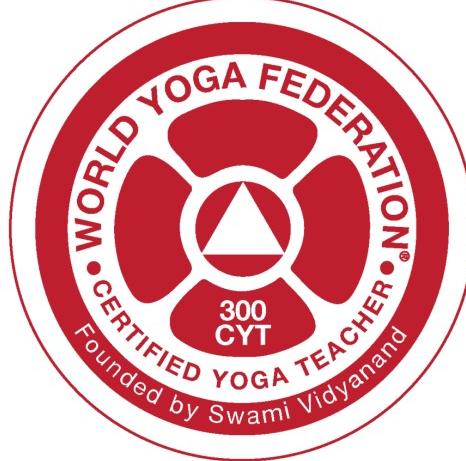
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**Deva Hardeep Singh (he/him; neurodivergent, gay, ability injured, post-traumatic stress injury, borderline personality injury)** is an Oklahoman, a Yuchi Indian, enrolled in the Muscogee Nation, and studied radio/TV/film in college. He's worked as an on-air personality, author, poet, artist, administrative assistant, petroleum landman, barista, staff writer, paralegal, concert promoter, music artist manager, content producer, and graphic designer. He spent 6 months as a National Data Team volunteer for the Bernie Sanders for President campaign. He is a freelance journalist with International papers and magazines with a social justice focus. Recently was able to join the Hulu/FX Series Reservation Dogs, as an extra (Seasons 2 & 3) He's been a meditator for over 30 years (Buddhist, Chan, Zen), teaches meditation, and provides yoga instruction, and a Reiki III Master.



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